

THE HEEED VOLUNTEER PROGRAMME

The **HEEED Centre**, also known as the **Panda Garden**, is located in Chembe, and is the focus of many activities in the HEEED Volunteer Programme. **The HEEED Centre Activities (at Panda Garden)** are overseen by a Malawian **HEEED Centre Projects Coordinator**. **Panda Garden** consists of:

- 1) 2 fish ponds; a number of organic vegetable gardens and individual plots overseen by both **HEEED** staff and independent Chembe community groups; a tree seedling nursery, as well as mature paw-paw and guava fruit trees; a briquette and mud-stove production unit.
- 2) **HEEED** Education + Art Centre: **HEEED Handicrafts** oversees *Art and Environment* weekly classes for 10 Chembe Primary School children, *Advanced Art* classes for 8 Chembe Secondary School students during the academic year, as well as the production of hand-made paper products from recycled waste, bottle-top baskets, tumblers from bottles; 10 Secondary School students called the *Great Philosophers Group* receive thrice-weekly supplementary classes in English, Biology, Geography or any other subject that is of particular interest to a HEEED Volunteer; environmental education includes a weekly after-dark video shows (dry-season).
- 3) Research: bilharzia snail-sampling at different lodge locations;
- 4) An *Early Childhood Development* programme for 19 children (from 2-6 years old) who have been orphaned - are being taken care of by family members other than their parents. These children are fed at the HEEED Centre from Mon-Friday, while learning basic English (from 7-11am) and the programme is funded by University of North Carolina Charlotte, USA.
- 5) Home-based Care: 22 needy families receive practical assistance on a bi-weekly basis.



Illegal firewood being collected from LMNP



Fuel briquettes are cheaper than firewood

HEEED Volunteer Programme

1. Health

- I. **Early Childhood Development Programme:** 19 children (between the ages of 2-6) receive a daily meal (fortified *Likunipala Porridge*), 6 days a week (from 7-11am) – during which time, an English teacher + her assistant teach and read to them in English. These children have each been orphaned due to family illness, and are taken care of by family members other than their parents. Volunteers can assist in managing the children as well as reading to them, playing, and facilitating creative activities.



A young child takes part in the daily morning feeding program

- II. **Home Based Care:** Within Chembe Village, 22 families who are particularly needy due to factors such as HIV/AIDS, other illness and poverty - receive practical assistance twice per week. Volunteers can assist in this programme by helping family members with chores, such as light cleaning, fetching water and nutritional advice. This is also a great time for you to practice your Chichewa!
- III. **Bilharzia Snail-Sampling.** Data collection, research and health/environmental education are the basis for this activity – by helping HEEED staff “test the waters” and learn how to sample the waters (around lodges) for the bilharzia vector. This parasite lives part of its cycle in a small snail as well as in humans, lowers the immune system and recent studies have shown this debilitating disease to be linked to the higher prevalence of HIV and AIDS along the lake-shore. Volunteers can track and monitor the changes of the parasite in the area through experiments done with the data collected. This information is provided to the local community and can be used as an educational tool to raise the awareness on the cause and effects of bilharzia.

2. Education/ Early Childhood Development

- I. **Teaching English as a Second Language:** Following an MOU between **HEEED** and the Chembe Secondary School, qualified university graduates can assist Chembe Secondary School in teaching English as a second language within the present curriculum. There are a total of 350 students – from Form 1 to Form 4. **HEEED** liaises with the local Headmaster in order to establish the time-table for the **HEEED** Volunteer assistant teacher. Science and computer-training could also be considered as a subjects, as well as overall health issues, including bilharzia and HIV/AIDS. Apart from standard Ministry of Education text books on these subjects (provided by the Secondary School) and if requested by Chembe Secondary School and funds were forthcoming - **HEEED** could provide “ *The Hiding Hyena*” as an educational cartoon booklet, using cartoon wild-life characters - **seeking to eliminate HIV and AIDS among young people**. **HEEED** could also provide relevant photo-copied texts from the **HEEED/GoM** publication “*Lake Malawi National Park – UNESCO World Heritage Site*” which gives detailed descriptions of this biological wonder.

- II. **Adult Literacy:** Lead English classes with adults who are interested in improving their English comprehension. Lesson planning will help you to guide your adult students through reading, writing, and speaking English. Classes can be held at the HEEED Centre with adults, many of whom did not benefit from the expanded English curriculum that now exists in Malawi.

- III. **Art Education and Creative Recycling:** **HEEED Education + Art Centre:** **HEEED Handicrafts** oversees *Art and Environment* weekly classes for 10 Chembe Primary School children, *Advanced Art* classes for 8 Chembe Secondary School students during the academic year, as well as the production of (saleable) hand-made paper products from recycled waste paper (books and cards), bottle-top baskets, tumblers from bottles, and much more! Volunteers who are particularly creative will thrive here, and we welcome your artistic knowledge into this programme.



Drawing pinned Ciclid fish at the HEEED Center

3. Environmental Education

- I. **Mud-Stove and Fuel Briquette Production:** the overall aim is to reduce deforestation in neighbouring Lake Malawi National Park. Mud-stoves (made from a mixture of mud and *vetiver* grass) reduce fire-wood consumption by 2/3 and are being constructed in different parts of Chembe village. Fuel briquettes, a sustainable alternative to firewood are made from chopped *vetiver* grass and

leaves. Volunteers can assist in the production of fuel briquettes, oversight of the operation, as well as leading instructional demonstrations to educate the community on this eco-friendly form of cooking and reducing wood use.

- II. **Nutrition & Cultivation:** **HEEED** has developed a nutritious menu – using locally produced vegetables and protein and encourages organic gardening – without the use of artificial fertilizer. This is an activity that **HEEED** volunteers could participate in/liase with Home-based Care and Early Childhood Development Programmes. There is always work to be done with garden upkeep, records related to planting, harvesting and using our land as an educational tool. **HEEED** Staff members and the community are encouraged to cultivate small plots.



Horticulture class at Panda Garden, Chembe

- III. **Aquaculture:** **HEEED** has long recognized rampant over-fishing in the Lake is depleting stocks and that family aquaculture ponds are a sustainable source of protein. **HEEED** has also demonstrated that, although smaller in size - the taste of the cultivated fish is no different from the wild-caught fish in the Lake. **HEEED** can provide the technical know-how on the construction and maintenance of fish-ponds, while the plastic lining is a cost borne by the interested family.



Aquaculture class at the HEEED Centre

- IV. **Tree-Seedling Nursery:** a variety of indigenous seedlings, also fruit trees are raised from seed and distributed freely to local families and schools. However, **HEEED** charges a fee to non-Malawi buyers and these purchases help to defray costs of **HEEED** salaries and electricity. The best time to plant a tree was 15 years ago, the second best time is now. We look to inspire more families to plant their own trees and enjoy the benefits down the road.
- V. **Cultural Mapping within Lake Malawi National Park:** Assist National Park staff in locating and mapping points of local interest within Lake Malawi National Park. Within the hills and small mountains that surround Cape Maclear, there are historically significant cave paintings that have gone undocumented up until now. Through cooperation with the National Parks Department, we plan to assist their staff by doing transect walks through the park, mapping the area with a GPS and noting our discoveries. The potential also exists for trail marking/building once points of interest have been discovered, thus increasing tourism to these areas.

4. Economic Development

- I. **HEEED Handicrafts:** A group of talented young artists produce a variety of hand-made paper products that include cards, books, business cards, gift items. Creative recycling is the hallmark of this enterprise that also provides an income to **HEEED** and volunteers are encouraged to participate in quality control, innovative ideas, as well as the marketing of **HEEED Handicraft** products both locally and overseas. **HEEED Handicrafts** also organizes *Art and Environment* drawing and calligraphy courses for young students. Volunteers can assist in the day to day production of items, create new designs and marketing plans, or organize a village-wide cleanup to collect recyclable materials. Latterly, the abundant plastic bag waste has now become recycled into functional crocheted bags with varying colours and designs.



HEEED greeting cards, made with recycled materials

VOLUNTEERING/INTERNSHIP <i>(1 to 6 months)</i>	SOLIDARITY DIVING <i>(1 or 2 weeks)</i>
Our vision	
<p>Support the community through a cross-cultural learning experience by volunteering or completing an internship at HEEED Malawi.</p> <p>You will promote the sustainable development of Chembe community and enhance the protection of its environment through the conservation of the beautiful LMNP.</p>	<p>Discover the unique aquatic biodiversity of Lake Malawi and participate in its conservation by booking diving holidays with Scuba Shark.</p> <p>As all benefits go to the local NGO HEEED Malawi, not only will you help protecting the LMNP, but you will also support the sustainable development of Chembe community.</p>

<p>140 USD per week, including* :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 days Accommodation • 5 * Breakfast • 5* Lunch • Administrative cost <p><i>*Price based on the dormitory and 5 day work week. Volunteer has flexibility to eat dinner in the evening at the restaurant or lodge of their choice, and are free to explore Malawi on their days off. – More luxurious options available at higher prices</i></p>	<p>Included in the weekly rate* :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$ 15 per working dive <p>140 USD per week, including*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 days Accommodation • 5 * Breakfast • 5* Lunch • Administrative cost <p><i>*Price based on the dormitory and 5 day work week. Volunteer has flexibility to eat dinner in the evening at the restaurant or lodge of their choice, and are free to explore Malawi on their days off. – More luxurious options available at higher prices</i></p>
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VOLUNTEER ACCOMMODATION

Accommodation Options

Volunteers usually stay at **Tandy House**, a quiet house located in the gardens at the rear of the property. However, Volunteers can also opt for more spacious rooms at **Fish Heaven House** or **Baobab House** on a space-available basis. The weekly HEEED Volunteer Programme cost is based on accommodation at **Tandy House** and this would increase if Volunteers were to stay in **Fish Heaven House** or **Baobab House**.



Fish Heaven House & garden overlooking Lake Malawi



Tandy House

- 1) **Meals:** The cost of your meals are covered through your volunteer contribution, and meals will be provided for you three times per day each day of the week. If you have any specific dietary restrictions, these can easily be accommodated! We are familiar with vegetarians, vegans, and those who are gluten intolerant.
- 2) **Laundry:** Clean sheets and pillow cases are provided weekly and Volunteers are expected to take care of their own personal laundry - using the washing basins. However, arrangements on an individual basis can be made if a Volunteer wishes to pay for laundry service.
- 3) **Transport:** HEEED can arrange a private taxi from Lilongwe airport to Chembe upon your arrival, although this can be quite expensive at around \$120. For the more adventurous, you can choose to start off your experience with tackling the public transportation system and more specific details on can be provided by our Volunteer Coordinator. In Monkey Bay there is a post office and a bank, as well as a market and a greater range of shops than in Chembe. **HEEED** currently has a vehicle and a 4-wheeler that can be used within Chembe village for project purposes, but not beyond – as this is not licensed to be used on the main road. There is also a Volunteer bicycle, with a lock and a pump, which is only for Volunteer use: not to be lent to anyone else and it is kept at Tandy House. When the volunteer leaves it is stored outside Alison's studio.

Kamuzu International Airport to Lilongwe Bus Station:

- Private Taxi - \$25
- Public Transport - \$5

Lilongwe Bus Station to Chembe/Cape Maclear:

- Private Taxi - \$100
- Public Transport - \$12

Kamuzu International Airport to Chembe/Cape Maclear:

- Private Taxi - \$120

- 4) **Health and Travel Insurance:** **HEEED** Volunteers are expected to provide their own health and travel insurance for the duration of their stay with **HEEED**. The local Chembe Billy Riordan Health Clinic can assist in emergencies and we also require that **HEEED** Volunteers take an anti-malarial prophylactic. If a **HEEED** Volunteer contracts bilharzia, this is easily treated with a dose of biltracide (prasiquantil) six weeks after leaving Malawi – which is specific to the parasite. Prasiquantil can be purchased from a pharmacy in Monkey Bay or Mangochi (<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dpd/parasites/schistosomiasis/http://www.cdc.gov/malaria>).

GENERAL INFORMATION AND HELPFUL TIPS FOR VOLUNTEERS

1. **HEEED Commitment:** **HEEED** accepts all volunteers on an independent basis and will do all it can to ensure that the Volunteer will have an enjoyable and safe experience during their stay in Malawi. However, the **HEEED** Volunteer is ultimately responsible for his/her own safety, health or events outside **HEEED** control - while working as a Volunteer. Although **HEEED** can and will offer support in an emergency situation, the Volunteer is expected to organize his/her own travel and travel insurance. To this end, the **HEEED** Volunteer will be requested, upon arrival at Tandy House, to sign a waiver and to pay a deposit for the room key. At the same time, **HEEED** undertakes to give the Volunteer an orientation session, introducing him/her to all staff, an up-date on current news at the project site, basic safety and cultural issues, as well as emergency telephone numbers.
2. **Malawian Visas and Work permits.** Non-Malawian Volunteers need to be aware of the rules regarding short-term visitors and longer-term stays in Malawi. However, non-Malawians can enter the country on a tourist visa for 30 days and this can be renewed for up to 3 months at Mangochi Department of Immigration (in either Mangochi, Blantyre or Lilongwe). Individuals wishing to stay longer can leave Malawi, visit Mozambique or Zambia for a short holiday and return for another 3 months.
3. **Code of Conduct:** **HEEED** Volunteers are expected to respect local customs, religions and traditions and behave in an appropriate manner. Unfortunately, illness and funerals are a regular occurrence in Chembe and this may delay or alter work plans. Moderate use of alcohol is permitted but no drugs are allowed at Tandy House. No visitors are allowed overnight at Tandy House and the **HEEED** Volunteer must inform the night watchman if he/she will return late. Should the Volunteer decide to alter his/her programme or duration of stay – he/she needs to inform the **HEEED Volunteer Coordinator, as well as the HEEED Malawi Coordinator**. Communication with **HEEED** staff is extremely important.
4. **Begging:** this trait has become more pronounced since the days of President Muluzi, when hand-outs from foreign donor organizations became the norm. As a result, a begging mentality has permeated the whole strata of society and the **HEEED** Volunteer needs to be alert to requests for anything from pencils to the contents of their purse. We strongly discourage a **HEEED** Volunteer from succumbing to more or less subtle forms of begging. If a Volunteer wanted to provide school fees for someone, this could become a subject of discussion.

However, this would require careful handling – if money is to be properly allocated and genuine school reports be sent to the donor. Please do not give any money to any individuals in the village or to **HEEED** staff. Please report any **HEEED** staff who request money from you as this is against **HEEED** policy. Gifts are greatly appreciated and should be handled by the **HEEED** Malawi Coordinator. All **HEEED** accounts are transparent and funds will be spent as you desire. Large donations will be deposited in their own designated account to be spent as the donor requests.



A game of *Bao* at Tandy house



Sunset cruise in LMNP

5. **Leisure:** kayaking, diving, snorkelling and sun-set excursions with the **HEEED 'Panda Boat'** can be offered to **HEEED** Volunteers at reduced rates. Divers must show their certification cards and **HEEED** (overseen by the **Cape Maclear Scuba Shack Diving School Instructor + HEEED Malawi Coordinator**) will organize diving equipment (using the buddy system), fuel and journey to the dive-/snorkelling site – to view the myriad wonders of LMNP brightly-coloured species of fish found nowhere else in the world. For the uninitiated, there are diving and snorkelling lessons offered by the **CAPE MACLEAR SCUBA SHACK DIVING SCHOOL**. For a modest fee, **HEEED** staff will also provide escorted walking tours to some of the surrounding hills and historic sites, as well as to the village itself.
6. **Communication-Internet and Telephone:** You can purchase an Airtel or TNM SIM card immediately upon arriving at Lilongwe airport, which you will then need to load with phone credit. Please purchase your SIM at the airport, and we will walk you through getting connected once you join us in Chembe!
7. **Cash:** It is best for a Volunteer to bring USD in cash (rather than pounds or Euros) etc.....The rate of exchange today (15-10-2021) at National Bank in Lilongwe is 810 Malawi Kwacha (MK) to 1 US\$. However, this rate of exchange may vary in the future.
8. **Questions and comments:** **HEEED** hopes that the Volunteers will enjoy their work and stay at Tandy House, Fish Heaven House or Baobab House. During and after your time with us we shall enthusiastically collect your feedback - so as to constantly update and improve our programme. Questions can be posed to anyone at any time and we are here to support you through the process.

Volunteer Coordinator

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